

Director's report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission
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November 5, 2004

A Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife

We serve Washington's citizens by protecting, restoring, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife-related recreational and commercial opportunities.

GOAL I: HEALTHY AND DIVERSE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS DEVELOP, INTEGRATE AND DISSEMINATE SOUND FISH, WILDLIFE AND HABITAT SCIENCE.

Research Published: Staff co-authored the paper titled "Distribution and abundance of humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) and other marine mammals off the northern Washington coast" that was published in the October 2004 issue of Fishery Bulletin, Volume 102 (4). The paper reports the results of six years of survey effort within the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS). Both the shipboard surveys and the development of the report involved collaboration with OCNMS and scientists from Cascadia Research Collective.

Lower Dosewallips Reach Analysis: In an agreement with the Port Gamble S'Klallam and Skokomish tribes and in cooperation with Washington Trout and the Hood Canal Coordinating Council, the TAPPS/HETA Section has recently completed the first draft of the Lower Dosewallips Reach Analysis. This study looks at the physical and biological conditions in the lower river (downstream of US 101) and proposes restoration activities that will enhance habitat for fish and wildlife. The report identifies channel aggradations and a prograding bay front as potentially destabilizing influences, the progression of distributaries to blind tidal channels, and the effects of historic channelization simplifying habitat.

Culvert Design Academy: The HETA Section participated in the Washington Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) Design Academy. The academy sought to enhance the skills of experienced engineers through small workshops and in-depth team design problems. HETA staff conducted five workshops on the design of road crossing for fish passage.

City of Marysville -Salmonid Habitat Restoration and Grow Management Plan: TAPPS/ERTA Biologist Chris Detrick is working with a WDFW Habitat Biologist to provide technical assistance to the City of Marysville on their Growth Management Plan. That plan will require mitigation on upper Quilceda Creek and tributaries to compensate for planned development that could include the new NASCAR racetrack, among other activities. We are working on channel restoration and enhancement options that will likely be directed at chum salmon, sea run cutthroat and resident trout. Much of the upper Quilceda Creek basin is now largely ditched and viewed primarily as drainage conveyance channels rather than fish habitat even though portions are still quite productive.

1418 Tide Gate Task Force: The 1418 technical team, through a contract with Dr. Greg Hood (Skagit River System Coop), has provided the 1418 Task Force with an assessment of 10 lowland areas south of LaConner in Skagit County for their estuary restoration potential. Approximately 1238 acres of public land (primarily WDFW land) were evaluated. Approximately 920 acres of private land were evaluated. Based on preliminary estimates developed by the Skagit River System Coop and NOAA Fisheries, the Task Force anticipates that more than 2,000 acres of new estuary habitat will be necessary to recover Skagit River Chinook, and that restoration of public lands alone will not achieve that objective. The agriculture representatives on the Task Force have been adamant that public lands should be restored before private lands are restored. WDFW should anticipate significant pressure from the Task Force and the agriculture community to restore public lands first. If WDFW does not affirm its commitment to salmon recovery in the Skagit River through aggressive estuary restoration on WDFW land, the farm community may exploit WDFW's hesitation and reluctance as a sign that salmon recovery is not important and may use it as an excuse to resist and avoid estuary restoration on private land.

Technical Management Team (TMT) Update: The TMT is an inter-agency technical group responsible for making recommendations on dam and reservoir operations in the Columbia River. At the October 27, 2004, meeting much of the discussion involved flow and tailwater elevations at Bonneville Dam to protect chum spawning, primarily in the Ives Island area just downstream of the dam. Bi-weekly chum spawning and redd surveys are conducted by WDFW and ODFW. A plan was developed to begin target dam operations for chum protection when they are detected in the Ives Island area. The TMT representatives will notify the Corps of Engineers immediately following detection of chum in the area. The "Annual Review of Lessons Learned: 2004" meeting is scheduled for November 10 at the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission office in Portland.

Mountain Goat Study: Staff has known for some time that a number of mountain goats are found on Gamma Ridge on Glacier Peak during the early summer, but disappear to unknown areas about mid-summer. Startling results have been obtained from the two mountain goats fitted with GPS collars in July of this year. One of these females moved about 18 KM northeast to Bonanza Peak (July 26-30). The other moved some 30 KM east to Pinnacle Peak (above Lake Chelan, August 10-17). Once having moved, both animals have remained relatively stationary at their new locations. Still and video representations of these moves can be found at:

http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/mtngoat/index.php?path=Locations/Map_Plots/Glacier_moves_04/

Recent Publications and Scientific Presentations: Watson, J.W. and U. Banasch. 2003. A tri-national investigation of ferruginous hawk migration. Progress Report 1. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, Washington, USA and Canadian Wildlife Service, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Wildlife Program staff and Cle Elum-Roslyn School District Superintendent Evelyn Nelson presented a program on Project CAT at The Wildlife Society annual convention in Calgary, Alberta. The Wildlife staff co-authored two other presentations: lynx use of habitats in winter in the Okanogan, and using students riding rural bus routes to document ungulates' presence and seasonal distribution. These presentations

were well received and cooperative relations were established with agencies in Canada and the U.S. to share progress and findings of these efforts.

Pygmy Rabbit: Staff attended a range-wide, multi-state, multi-agency Pygmy Rabbit Workshop and a Pygmy Rabbit Science Team meeting (two separate events) in Pullman, Washington. Two papers were presented at the workshop. The first presentation discussed the range-wide genetic diversity and population differentiation of pygmy rabbits, and provided evidence for reduced genetic diversity within the current Washington population and the large genetic distance between the Washington rabbits and the rabbit populations within the Great Basin area. The second presented the genetic status of the WDFW rabbit captive breeding program at Washington State University, Oregon Zoo, and Northwest Trek. The Washington population has had low genetic diversity for at least 50 years (as measured by museum skin samples), and it was within this context that the captive breeding program was begun. As such, the captive population has suffered from extremely low genetic diversity. However, when Idaho rabbits were introduced to the captive program, and efforts were focused on producing F1 hybrids and hybrid backcrosses with pure Washington rabbits, the genetic diversity within the captive population dramatically increased. At the Science Team meeting, staff discussed animal husbandry at each of the three facilities and began the discussion concerning mate pairings for the 2005 breeding season.

Project CAT: To date staff has obtained, and plotted into ArcGIS, 13,957 GPS locations for cougars marked on Project CAT. A sub-adult male, who was marked with a GPS collar on June 1, 2004, and relocated to a remote area south of Cle Elum, was killed by a hunter at Oak Creek October 8. GPS data retrieved from the collar shows that the cougar traveled south to Oak Creek and continued south over Satus Pass, overlooking the Columbia east of Goldendale, and returned along the route to Oak Creek where it was killed by the hunter. It took approximately one month for the cougar to travel from the Taneum Creek release site to the Columbia River. This cougar was relocated to the Taneum after staff immobilized it and removed it from a tree in the front yard of a farm south of Ellensburg. Staff marked another sub-adult male that was accompanying its mother in January 2003. This sub-adult dispersed from the study area and was killed by a hunter in the fall of 2003 west of Goldendale. This cougar also traveled to the Columbia River within a month after dispersing from the study area. In addition to these sub-adult males, we had marked two other sub-adult males that had dispersed from Kittitas County study area. Radio contact has been lost with these cougars and their fates are unknown.

PROTECT, RESTORE, AND ENHANCE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND THEIR HABITATS.

Meat Locker Inspection: Officer Hahn found several violations while conducting a meat locker inspection in Spokane. While one inspection was being conducted, a party called to arrange for processing of an elk from Wyoming, which is a prohibited state under Chronic Wastage Disease (CWD) regulations. Officer Hahn contacted the party and made arrangements for disposal. Officers are conducting these inspections around the state and are working with the Wildlife Program in seizing and disposing of carcasses.

Sauk River Hydraulic Update: Inquiry Judge subpoenas were issued last week to witnesses in Darrington regarding the Sauk River hydraulic violation. Recipients were not pleased and held another meeting and invited State Representative Kirk Pearson and U.S. Congressman Rick Larsen to express their displeasure. As a result, Congressman Larsen's Office has made an inquiry to NMFS and State Representative Pearson has communicated directly with both Chief Bjork and Captain Hebner. Representative Pearson is very sympathetic to the local citizenry in Darrington and is concerned that state and federal agencies may over-react to the situation and may provide service that is less than good public service. Continual communication with Representative Pearson throughout this process to explain the state's perspective is essential. The investigation continues and we are working closely with our partner agencies and the Prosecutor's Office.

Two Cougars Killed: Sergeant Chandler got a call from a citizen on Novelty Hill in Redmond at 7:00 p.m. Thursday the 28th, saying that he had two cougars in his chicken coop. After determining that the cats were still there, Sergeant Chandler responded. Upon arriving at the house and putting his spotlight on the coop, he saw a cougar perched in the apple tree inside the chicken wire. As Sergeant Chandler approached with the homeowner, a second set of eyes was noticed in the tree. At about 20 yards the cats started to get anxious and both were shot and killed while still in the coop. They were both juvenile females around 40 lbs., one slightly larger than the other. Several chickens were killed. As Sergeant Chandler was loading the cats into his truck, he heard a third cat "chirping" in the woods behind the coop. It is unknown what this third cat was. This incident is only about 1/4 mile from where an adult female cougar was killed by a motorcycle on 10/12.

Salmon Recovery: NOAA Fisheries proposed listing Lower Columbia River coho as threatened in the June 14, 2004, Federal Register. WDFW staff has been working with NOAA Fisheries to explore alternatives to the threatened listing. Due to the large investments that have already been made in salmon recovery planning in this region, the Department feels that the best vehicle for recovering Lower Columbia coho will be implementation of these planning efforts and engaging the federal Policy for Evaluation of Conservation Efforts (PECE), which can serve as an alternative to the threatened listing. Through meetings and discussion with senior NOAA staff, WDFW has made clear to NOAA our intention of using PECE for Lower Columbia River coho; this will also be reflected in our formal agency comments that are being submitted to NOAA in response to the Federal Register Notice that established the proposed coho listing. ODFW has also expressed a willingness to support us in this effort.

WDFW staff delivered a presentation on "Salmon Recovery in Washington: Status and Accomplishments" at the Northwest Salmonid Conference in Seattle on October 26.

WDFW staff met with Senator Mark Doumit on a variety of issues and provided him with materials on Lower Columbia fall chinook fisheries, information on marked and unmarked hatchery fish in the Columbia River Basin, an update on sturgeon, and background on PECE and the proposed threatened listing for Lower Columbia River coho.

IRM Salmon Recovery staff worked in conjunction with Business Services staff to test a new methodology for using cost accounting to report on agency expenditures by activities identified in the agency's strategic plan. The technique was applied to two separate external requests for agency expenditures on salmon recovery. The technique provides a consistent and methodical approach to responding to queries about agency expenditures; it also allows us to provide clear documentation on precisely which activities were included in responding to a query. The new approach worked very well and should serve as an asset in the future.

Poaching Ring Discovered: While off-duty, Officer Chadwick and Captain Cenci observed a subject trespassing and hunting ducks during the closed season. They seized the ducks and the hunter's gun. They followed up with citations and search warrants. Evidence of possession of marijuana was discovered after entering the residence. Scales and product packaged for resale were discovered. The "sportsman" had helped harvest a substantial marijuana grow operation two weeks ago. This case will expand as interviews with the gentleman show that multiple local people involved in methamphetamine use and horticulture are also involved in killing big game at night, behind gates, and during the closed season.

Invasive Tunicate Treatment: WDFW staff participated in the ongoing efforts to control the spread of an invasive tunicate on Saturday, October 16th, at Edmonds Underwater Park. Samples were taken to the USGS laboratory to be cultured for future experiments. Divers determined that about half of the previously tarped and treated infestation appeared to be dead. Additional chlorine was applied to the sight, and the chlorine tablets were crushed to increase the dose. More infested sites were discovered in the area indicating that eradication may not be possible. Our challenge now may be to develop practical control methods that minimize the economic and environmental damage from this introduction.

Chronic Wasting Disease: Staff continues to collect brain stems from harvested deer. Dr. Briggs Hall personally called on small town newspapers this week to ask them to run our press release. The message has been well received; we will see how many of them run it. Olympia sent the news release to the large papers. With the help of temporary CWD assistant Julie Tyson, staff compiled a list of landfills that will accept deer carcasses and deer heads that need to be disposed of after CWD samples are collected. This should be helpful to field biologists and volunteers who need to dispose of such material.

Deer Hair-loss Syndrome: Dr. Briggs Hall has had several long discussions with Dr. Jack Mortenson of the USDA regarding the hair loss syndrome. Evidence is mounting that the lice causing our black tailed deer to groom excessively is an exotic louse species. A second louse expert from Oklahoma has concurred with Dr. Mertins at NVSL that the lice are in fact an exotic species. Oregon has submitted a number of louse samples from both hair loss deer and normal deer, including mule deer. The samples have been submitted without information as to where they came from or the condition of the deer. In every case, the experts have identified the lice from the hair loss deer as the exotic louse *Damalina cervicola*, and the lice from the normal black tailed deer and mule deer as the normal deer louse *Damalina tricholipeurus*.

Priest Rapids Hydro Project: Agreement among parties has been achieved for boundaries of the Habitat Management Plan Area (i.e., Priest Rapids and Wanapum reservoirs) except for that on the east side of the two reservoirs. This is partly the result of the Columbia Basin Irrigation Districts newly arrived presence at the negotiations. At the last meeting it was agreed to place a hold on the east shore plan area boundary and begin discussion of measures on the west shore, which in Wanapum Reservoir is primarily Colockum, Quilomene, and Whiskey Dick Wildlife Areas. These WDFW lands have been the most adversely affected by ongoing, increasing habitat-degrading impacts caused by people recreating on Wanapum Reservoir. Major Projects and Intergovernmental Resource Management staffs continue to refine potential protection, mitigation, and enhancement measures with the WDFW managers of the three west-shore Wildlife Areas.

Dalco Passage Oil Spill: Within two hours of notification, the Oil Spill Team had provided Ecology with a report on the fish and wildlife resources at risk in the vicinity of the spill, the appropriate Geographic Response Plans to protect critical habitats, and was fully deployed for air operations, on-the-water sampling and reconnaissance, and on the road to the Incident Command headquarters that was being established. Spill Team members Brian MacDonald and Dan Doty handled on-the-water duties taking water and sediment samples ahead of the spill for baseline information and keeping an eye out for oiled wildlife; Andy Carlson was on helicopter over-flights determining the current location of the oil, oiled beaches, and watching for oiled wildlife; Chris Lane headed up the Wildlife Branch at the Incident Command overseeing wildlife rescue and rehabilitation operations; Barry Troutman served in the Environmental Unit at Incident Command and assisted with news conferences; and Eric Larsen manned the Department's situation room and coordinated all of the above. Enforcement, Public Affairs, and the Wildlife Program also provided important assistance. The spill was estimated at about 1,000 gallon gallons of Bunker-C oil, which is a heavy fuel oil used by freighters and other large vessels. The source remains unknown and a couple of ships are under investigation by Ecology and the US Coast Guard. Most sea birds that winter in the area had not arrived, so large numbers of wildlife were not oiled. To date, one oiled bird (a western grebe) has been captured and rehabilitated. Three non-oiled dead harbor seals were collected and one lightly oiled live harbor seal pup was captured and subsequently died. The cause of death is pending results of a necropsy.

Nichols Brothers Boat Builders, Inc. (NBBBI): NBBBI conducted work this summer on (1) a mitigation project required by US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) for installation of a marine rail system completed without permits, and (2) mitigation required by WDFW for damage to eelgrass habitat sustained during the launch of Empress of the North in summer 2003. The USACE and agencies agreed that removal of an abandoned dock at the south end of Holmes Harbor would satisfy USACE mitigation requirements. The dock consisted primarily of creosote-treated timber piles and decking, a large concrete block foundation at the seaward end, and two 12-pile creosote-treated timber dolphins off shore. Demolition of the dock and associated structures occurred in August of this year. In addition to greatly improving water quality, this project has removed approximately 5,250 ft² of over-water cover and restored habitat to a documented forage fish-spawning beach. To mitigate for approximately 2 acres of eelgrass habitat damaged during the launch of the Empress, NBBBI is funding a research study by Battelle Northwest Marine Laboratory. In this study, Battelle is comparing traditional transplanting

methods with new seeding methods developed on the East Coast. With the new seeding method, mature seed that is still attached to the eelgrass blades was collected from adjacent, undamaged eelgrass beds. The eelgrass blades were transferred to lantern nets and suspended from buoys anchored within the damaged area. It is expected that as seed drops from the blade, currents will wash seed out of the lantern nets where it will fall to the bottom and germinate. Seeding success from this technique will be evaluated next summer. If successful, this new method has the potential to substantially reduce the time and cost of eelgrass mitigation projects.

Snohomish River Salmon Recovery Planning: A meeting was held for interested WDFW staff on the recently completed Draft Snohomish Salmon Conservation Plan. Staff from Enviro Issues and WRIA 7 gave the presentation. The Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum has produced a draft Salmon Conservation Plan that guides actions to protect and restore salmon runs in the Snohomish River Basin, and that responds to recent listings of Puget Sound chinook salmon and bull trout as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (coho salmon are designated as a species of concern). Recommendations in this plan are based on sound technical analysis; they focus on high-level activity in priority habitat areas; they focus on near-term recovery milestones (the next ten years); and they include capital projects, technical assistance, policy recommendations, stewardship, and incentives. The Snohomish Basin is just one of the 14 WRIAs that make up the Puget Sound Evolutionary Significant Unit for chinook salmon. Shared Strategy is the nonprofit organization formed to roll up the 14 WRIA chapters into a comprehensive draft recovery plan for Puget Sound chinook that will be presented to NOAA Fisheries in December 2005.

Delta Lateral Gas Pipeline: This project has been very controversial locally, and delays in permitting caused mainly by local landowners resulted in Northwest Pipeline invoking the Natural Gas Act to waive all local and state permitting. Construction began around June 1, with stream crossings occurring in July-August. The 16" ID gas line was also be horizontally drilled under the entire lower Snohomish River and its sloughs. This project required considerable monitoring this summer, but was similar to a project by the same company in 2003. That work went very well, and only a few problems occurred from this work in 2004. "Frac-outs" occurred due to horizontal directional drilling under a tributary of Ebey Slough and under one of the islands west of Ebey Slough. The bentonite that emerged at the surface was quickly contained, and the crews were well trained and prompt in their cleanup. The Catherine Creek crossing, perhaps the most controversial, was a model of ideal construction practices, and no significant impacts to instream habitat occurred.

ENSURE WDFW ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS, FACILITIES, AND LANDS ARE CONSISTENT WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS THAT PROTECT AND RECOVER FISH, WILDLIFE, AND THEIR HABITATS.

Boating Facilities Grants: WDFW staff including Don Ponder, Sue Patnude, Dave King, Pad Smith, Kristen Kuykendall, John Hansen, and Steve Sherlock worked hard to get five of nine boating facilities projects approved for funding through IAC. This represents \$1.4 million out of \$4.8 million available. State Parks took the rest including \$1.7 million for a breakwater.

General HPA for Pile Replacement: WDFW staff collaborated with WSDOT, WDOE, King County, USFWS, NOAA, ACOE, and other stakeholders on updating and provisioning WSDOT's statewide pile-replacement HPA. The federal agencies are also submitting updated permits for pile replacement and construction projects. Consistency between federal and state permits is a key goal of streamlining the permit process for all parties. New information from WDFW on bull trout, as well as recent findings by PSWQAT and others, show that pile replacement in some highly contaminated urban bays requires more intensive management. This would include project-specific monitoring for PAH releases from contaminated sediments, and adaptive schedules to avoid or otherwise mitigate impacts to fish life.

INFLUENCE THE DECISIONS OF OTHERS THAT AFFECT FISH, WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITATS.

Denman Island Workshop: Staff attended a two-day workshop on Risk Assessment for Denman Island Disease in Tacoma, which was organized by the Pacific Shellfish Institute. Present at the workshop were all major Pacific Coast seed producers, regulators, and a shellfish pathologist, as well as risk assessment experts from NOAA Fisheries and the USDA. The purpose of the workshop was to assess the risk of transferring Denman Island Disease from Washington to other states and countries through the export of shellfish aquaculture products, including broodstock, seed, and market ready seafood. The discussions held at this workshop reinforced the efforts made by WDFW to control the spread of this disease within the state and gives WDFW more leverage to demand better cooperation from leaders in the shellfish industry, assuming they want to see shellfish exports as a viable component of their business operations. This is of vital importance as in the coming weeks and months the European Union will be conducting an audit of the shellfish industry in Washington State to determine whether or not to continue importation of Washington shellfish to Europe.

Priest Rapids: Director Koenings submitted a comment letter to NOAA Fisheries regarding the co-manager draft BiOp remand for the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS). The Department has a number of concerns with the draft that is due to be released as a final in late November.

Wildlife Viewing and Coalition Meeting in Soap Lake: Over 70 local wildlife viewing activists participated in the October 12-13, 2004, Wildlife Viewing Conference and Coalition Meeting in Soap Lake. Hosted by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, participation by the conference attendees was lively and enthusiastic, and focused on the importance placed on wildlife viewing's contribution to our rural economies. Among the attendees were Representative Jane'a Holmquist and Commissioner John Hunter.

The keynote speech was the first public presentation of the Strategic Plan for Wildlife Viewing in Washington, which has roots to last year's wildlife viewing conference. Additional popular discussions focused on the nuts and bolts of the business of wildlife viewing, and successes and horror stories of wildlife festival planners.

The enthusiasm of the conferees resulted in a change to one of the recommendations in the statewide strategic plan. Instead of conducting similar conferences every two years, as was recommended, the

strong recommendation from the floor was to conduct a wildlife viewing conference every year. Two communities have already offered to host the next wildlife viewing conference.

Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District: We received advance notification from the Seattle District of the Corps of Engineers that they plan to assert jurisdiction on Rocky Ford Creek as a water of the US. Corps personnel visited the SVID project on Rocky Ford Creek during June while the construction was still underway. Their decision is consistent with the results of a recent (1997) Clean Water Act case involving dairy waste entering a small irrigation drain near Sunnyside. DOE and Yakima County have been waiting for direction from the Corps and may use the federal decision to guide their actions. Region 3 staff from Habitat and Fish programs developed a draft list of priority waterways within Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District, and the list was delivered to SVID Manager Jim Trull through a letter from Regional Director Jeff Tayer. Additional discussions with SVID are expected after they review the WDFW priorities.

Entiat River SRFB and RFEG Projects: Two large Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Regional Fisheries Enhance Group projects (totaling nearly \$300,000) are currently underway along the Entiat River in Chelan County. The John Small Project involves construction of a floodplain pond and wetland complex with a side channel connection to the river. The project will also install log structures near the outlet to the Entiat to help rearing salmonids gain access to the new side channel. The Wilson Side Channel project will also create and enhance off channel rearing habitat. It will also eliminate an existing entrapment situation in ponds that are only accessible through culverts at specific flows. Both projects will increase rearing habitat and security for endangered spring chinook and summer steelhead.

GOAL II: SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE-RELATED OPPORTUNITIES

PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL

OPPORTUNITIES COMPATIBLE WITH MAINTAINING HEALTHY FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND HABITATS.

Hanford Area Harvest of Elk: Following the issuance of 100 emergency permits remains modest. Despite the issuance of 100 additional permits that add hunting opportunity for Hanford area elk the harvest is only about 32 elk. This is only about 25% of the estimated recruitment for 2004. WDFW herd goals for this area require a 50% reduction in herd size from the current herd size of over 600 to around 300-350 animals. Even with WDFW's very aggressive approach toward harvest we may not harvest as many elk as were born this year let alone reduce the herd.

The brightest note of this fall's harvest is the cooperation we engendered with the 100 permits. Cooperative landowners have managed hunting in a manner that has encouraged cow harvest. Only 4 of the 32 elk killed so far have been bulls. Another bright spot has been that none of the landowners that received the permits have charged an access fee for hunters using the permits.

Puget Sound Commercial Crab Fishery: The fall commercial crab opener had a disruptive start on October 1, 2004, as a result of last minute discussions with commercial crab advisors regarding the appropriate numbers of pots per permit to be allowed in Region 1 (North Puget Sound). A meeting with

crab fishers in September indicated majority support to start the fishery with 75 pots in this area and Department regulations, mailings, and web site information were structured around this preference. On September 25, less than six days before the October 1 opening, the Puget Sound Crab Association (PSCA) reconsidered this recommendation due to concerns about the potential magnitude of the recreational crab catch and the likelihood that the tribes would start the fishery with a small pot allowance. Both factors could serve to cause early closure of the commercial, non-treaty fishery in Region 1, though an important fishery objective exists to extend the fishery as long as possible. Even though these factors were discussed at the crabbers' initial meeting on September 10, their subsequent reconsideration resulted in a recommendation to the Department on September 27, from the commercial crab advisory group, to start the fishery in Region 1 with a 50 pot per permit limit. After lengthy consideration, IRM and Fish Program staff decided to implement an emergency rule to start with the lower 50 pot limit. The outcome of this process reflects our best attempts to choose between conflicting alternatives, none of which had uniform support within the commercial crab industry or reflected a clearly optimal solution. This "case study" will be analyzed with crab fishery stakeholders to improve the timeliness and certainty of future decision-making. This example, however, is reflective of increasing difficulties with managing Puget Sound crab fisheries. The desire of some key constituents to become involved in micro-management in a less than collaborative spirit will need to be resolved, especially since the crab industry is often split on central management issues and the more vocal stakeholders do not necessarily reflect any true consensus among the fleet.

Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC): The PSC held its annual Executive Session during the week of October 18, 2004, to discuss potential issues and work plans for the upcoming 2005 Commission cycle. As a result of these bilateral discussions, the Fraser River Panel has been assigned the task of revising the 1999 Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon annex within the U.S.-Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty to reflect changes in the decision process and total allowable catch (TAC) calculation methods that had been "test driven" under Commission guidance negotiated since 2001. This provides some limited opportunity to resolve other issues that have arisen in recent years due to unforeseen changes in management circumstances. Canada also requested that the U.S. participate in a Canadian domestic review of 2004 sockeye fisheries that has been precipitated largely by a significant (perhaps unprecedented) loss of sockeye between the lower river and the spawning grounds. In many cases, only 10 percent of the expected spawning populations actually arrived at upstream locations. Although record-high in-river water temperatures undoubtedly caused major en-route mortalities, additional concerns have developed regarding potential increases in illegal in-river fishing activity and changes in hydro-acoustic abundance estimation methods at Mission, British Columbia. The total U.S. commercial catch of Fraser sockeye was 192,000 in 2004, which exceeded the in-season target of 167,000 due to problems with timely catch accounting, primarily in treaty fisheries. The U.S. will address this problem before initiation of 2005 fisheries.

WORK WITH TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS TO ENSURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES ARE ACHIEVED.

Coastal Crab Fishery: IRM and Fish Program staff met with Quileute tribal representatives on October 8, 2004, for the third time to discuss proposals for the 2004-05 coastal crab fisheries off the northern Washington coast. The Tribe had sent a proposal on October 7 that would restrict the non-treaty fishery north of the Queets River to only three weeks, a period of time that the Tribe feels would represent approximately half the projected total crab catch in the area if the non-treaty fishery otherwise continued fishing. At the meeting, a Hoh tribal representative also attended and the tribes communicated that they would be sending a new joint proposal that would similarly restrict the non-treaty fishery to three weeks, but for the area north of the Quinault River. The tribes' goal is to ensure that the non-treaty catch be approximately the same as the treaty catch, even if the overall catch has to be significantly reduced as a result. The Department's interpretation of the Rafeedie Decision is that the tribes need to have a similar opportunity to pursue their share of the crab catch, just as non-treaty fishers do. The Quileute Tribe has five boats participating in the fishery. The Hoh Tribe has had no boats participating in the fishery, but reports that one, or possibly two, might fish in 2004-05. Additional meetings are planned for early November to seek an agreement, or at least an understanding that the state and tribes will not object to each other's Section 4.6 notices opening the 2004-05 coastal crab fisheries.

Representatives of the Department and Quinault Indian Nation have also met several times to seek agreement on the non-treaty crab fishery in the Quinault usual and accustomed (U&A) area. It is possible that the 2004-05 crab fisheries in this area may operate absent joint agreement as the Tribe has not been able to finalize support for two separate tentative agreements that have been struck, even though stated tribal objectives likely would have been accommodated. Additional discussions will likely occur in early November.

Annual Shellfish Co-Management Meeting: This annual state/tribal meeting was held on September 28-29, 2004, and focused primarily on catch accounting and enforcement issues. Action items from the meeting included the following (not all-inclusive): October 10 state/tribal meeting to discuss red sea urchin culture proposal; intent to post signatures for state/tribal shellfish management plans on NWIFC website; schedule and lead assignments for development of 2005-06 plans to be completed as soon as possible; state/tribal technical workgroup was formed and initially met to identify possible approaches to evaluate recreational crab catch estimation bias and discuss potential options to collect additional qualitative information on sub-area catch distribution; regional discussions will be held by November 15 to reach agreement on soft-shell opening/closing criteria for Puget Sound crab fisheries; shrimp technical team will convene to evaluate pathways for marketing Puget Sound shrimp so that specific steps to resolve associated unreported catch issues can be identified and acted upon; joint state/tribal regional enforcement meetings will be re-initiated before North of Falcon in order to fully identify enforcement priorities and specific opportunities for joint enforcement emphasis; and DNR will take the lead in instigating joint state/tribal monitoring activities to ensure that catch accounting compliance provisions in annual geoduck harvest plans are being uniformly implemented.

IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF WASHINGTON BY PROVIDING DIVERSE, HIGH QUALITY RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Puget Sound Commercial Salmon Management: The Puget Sound chum run in general appears to be very strong and is returning at levels significantly higher than expected. The wholesale price paid to fishers has been \$0.35 to \$ 0.45 per pound, which is about twice that of recent years.

South Puget Sound - The in-season run size has been updated to 1,000,000 chum, which would be higher than the record run of 956,000 observed in 2002. The non-treaty commercial catch to date is approximately 401,000 chum.

Hood Canal - The run size appears to be at least 50% higher than the pre-season forecast and a formal in-season update will occur next week. The non-treaty catch to date is approximately 95,000 chum.

Skagit - The run size was updated to 142,000 from the pre-season forecast of approximately 117,000. This allows for a limited non-treaty gillnet fishery and the sport fishery for chum to open.

San Juan Islands (Area 7, & A fishery) - Non-treaty catches to date are approximately 70,000, and the U.S. allocation of 176,000 chum for treaty and non-treaty fisheries in this area is expected to be met next week.

These and other chum runs in Puget Sound will continue to be updated as more information is available.

Razor Clam Project: The October razor clam opener proceeded as follows with results:

October 2004	HARVEST (clams)	EFFORT (digger trips)	CPUE (clams/digger trip)
Long Beach	172,268	13,509	12.8
Twin Harbors	74,683	5,549	13.5
Copalis	98,389	7,006	14.0
Mocrocks	65,756	4,807	13.7
Kalaloch	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
TOTAL	411,096	30,871	13.3

Methow River Steelhead Fishery: CPUE is much lower than last year at this time and the pressure is spread out over a much larger area of the river due to the lower section closure. Fishermen are starting to keep more ad-clipped hatchery fish because of the news releases and constant reminders from the creel techs. There still is some grumbling about the lower river closure, but the majority of the fisherman realize what we are trying to accomplish---provide maximum fishery opportunity while removing surplus hatchery fish from the spawning population. The number of anglers catching and releasing large numbers of hatchery and wild fish is reduced from last year. This may allow us to keep the fishery open longer than last year because "allowable wild fish impacts" should not be exhausted as quickly.

Clam and Oyster Enhancement: A bid for 2.15 million Manila clam seed for public beach enhancement has been accepted, and will be planted by WDFW staff next spring. Production from this seed is expected to produce 13,438 sport limit equivalents of harvest size clams in two to three years. An additional bid for the supply and planting of 778 bags of cultched Pacific oyster seed was accepted. With a previous accepted bid for 1,263 bags and a trade agreement between the Squaxin Tribe and the state for 668 bags, a total of 2,709 bags of Pacific oyster seed will be planted on ten important recreational beaches next spring. Production from this seed is expected to produce 135,450 sport limit equivalents of harvest size oysters in two to three years.

GOAL III: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE PROVIDE EXCELLENT PROFESSIONAL SERVICE.

Mount Saint Helens: The recent volcanic action that is going on with Mount St. Helens kept Region 5 Enforcement Officers busy with evacuations. The Officers have worked late shifts and over the weekends trying to discourage folks from entering a 12-mile radius of the mountain. Region 3 and Region 5 Captains were given the directive from Chief Bjork to contact their local Sheriffs and WSP Captains to coordinate efforts with them and to advise that we have the equipment and personnel ready to assist for evacuation, search and rescue, or other emergency assistance.

Felons Arrested: Officer Valentine contacted two individuals in October at the Slater Access Area this week. Neither one of them had a vehicle use permit, but they both had active felony warrants, one for drugs and the other for forgery. State Patrol, Whatcom County Sheriff's, and Ferndale Police Department (PD) all responded. Ferndale PD transported and booked one of the individuals. State Patrol K9 was called and searched the car. Marijuana under 20g and miscellaneous drug paraphernalia, including heroin kits was discovered. The registered owner of the vehicle was contacted to pick up the vehicle. Officer Valentine transported and booked the other individual into Whatcom County Jail. This type of incident has become commonplace at our access sites.

WDFW Officers Educate Sheriff's Deputies: Sergeant Rahn and Officers Hahn and Taylor gave a presentation to Spokane County deputies regarding Fish and Wildlife Officers duties, our statutes, and improved coordination with the Sheriff's Office. There seems to be a young cadre of deputies that have very little knowledge of natural resources issues and our enforcement role. This is an excellent step to try to foster improved working knowledge of our issues with Spokane County and let them know what we are all about. Good job to Sergeant Rahn and Officers Hahn and Taylor who took the initiative to set this training up. Captains and Sergeants have been instructed to make these local law enforcement contacts to help multiply our fish and wildlife protection goals. We are already seeing results in our efforts through multiple fish and wildlife case referrals.

Fatal Hunting Accident: Detachment 5 (Clark County) Officers assisted Sergeant Brown and the Skamania County Sheriff Detectives in a follow-up hunting accident investigation of a previously reported "self-inflicted" fatal accident, which was reported in early October. Officers Hughes, Moats, Hart, and Orr spent hours with the metal detectors combing the area. They did not find the bullet, but did collect

other vital evidence (including the sabots), which determined the accident was not self-inflicted. Officers Meyers and Sergeant Webb assisted with mapping the routes taken by the companions and establishing timelines and GPS points. A Skamania County Detective assisted Sergeant Brown with developing grids and determining bullet paths. It was excellent training provided by Sergeant Brown. Skamania County Detectives will be applying for search warrants for the collection of additional evidence from the hunting companions in an effort to bring closure to this case.

DEVELOP INFORMATION SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE AND COORDINATE DATA SYSTEMS TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO SERVICES AND INFORMATION.

Hydraulic Permit Management System: Staff continued to refine the web-enabled database application for HPAs. Video-conferencing training sessions for regional staff were established (October 26 and 29), with the expectation of going live on November 22, 2004.

Hydraulic Permit Management System (HPMS): The new HPMS application, which will be used by Habitat biologists to process Hydraulic Project Approvals and issue permits, has entered the final testing and training phase. Final changes to the application and data conversion will be completed over the next several weeks, with implementation of the new system scheduled for the end of November.

GoHunt: The Wildlife Program would like to invite you to take a tour of a new web-based GIS application named GoHunt, a take off from "Go Play Outside". We have been working on this project in conjunction with staff from Information Technology Services for the past nine months and are on the threshold of announcing it to the public. Before that happens however, we want to offer WDFW staff a preview of the application. We need your review and comments to ensure that what we've assembled is ready or near ready for primetime. It gives us the opportunity to exercise the servers and software with the goal of identifying potential problems prior to public release.

GoHunt, to a large extent, is based on the existing SalmonScape application. So, if you've used SalmonScape, you should be reasonably comfortable with GoHunt. New functionality introduced with GoHunt includes access to mapping tools via 'buttons', more locators that allow the user to spatially search for place names and to zoom in on areas, such as Wildlife Areas and Game Management Units, which are of particular interest to hunters and outdoor recreationists. The application allows a user to query the last three years of hunting statistics and zoom to geographic areas meeting the parameters of the query. Like SalmonScape, GoHunt provides access to seamless orthophoto coverage statewide, but also includes USGS topographic maps, water access sites, hunting areas, and a recent true color Landsat image that offers some very interesting views of large landscapes. There is still some work left to spruce up the application prior to a formal public release, so don't be too surprised if you find a few rough edges and have to rely on intuition to determine what to do next. The application can be accessed via the following link: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/mapping/gohunt/index.html>

RECONNECT WITH THOSE INTERESTED IN WASHINGTON'S FISH AND WILDLIFE.

Adopt an Access: Region 6 Access Manager Brian Mitchell was featured this month in the "Drops Of Water" bi-monthly publication of the Chehalis River Council. The Council recently adopted the Littlerock Road access to the Black River. This program resembles DOT's "Adopt a Highway", program. WDFW provides a sign with the name of the organization on it. WDFW also provides garbage bags, gloves, and disposal of the litter once it has been picked up. The Black River site is Brian's third new "adopt an access project" this year.